

The Black Panther Party has contributed to an increase of violence but never has amounted to a "clear and present danger" to the U.S. government, the House Committee on Internal Security concludes in a report released yesterday.

The committee majority, following extensive hearings, determined that, "Fortunately, the Panthers' rhetoric regarding revolutionary activity has always exceeded performance."

But a minority of four Republicans objected to the generally moderate, non-alarmist tone of the report. Reps. John M. Ashbrook (Ohio), Roger H. Zion (Ind.), Fletcher Thompson (Ga.), and John G. Schmitz (Calif.) declared the report "does not give the reader a clear understanding of the Black Panther Party as a subversive criminal group using the facade of politics and Marxist-Leninist ideology as a cover for crimes of violence and extortion."

The Republicans claimed that the alliance between the U.S. Communist party and the Panthers became close when the militant black group's leaders were arrested and the Panthers needed legal assistance.

Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), who was head of a subcommittee which heard former Panthers testify, wrote in a separate summation that the party "as a national organization, is near disintegration. Its peak membership was never more than 1,500 or 2,000, and the committee hearings document the steady decline in these numbers during the last year."

Wants No 'Martyrs'

Preyer said he disagreed with those who favored a more highly critical report. He conceded that it would be easy "to write a real zinger of a report" that would provoke greater public outrage, but it also might help revive the party by taking martyrs of its leaders, he said.

The majority report said, "The Black Panther Party,

through its deliberately inflammatory rhetoric and through the actual arming and military training of its members, has contributed to an increase in acts of violence and constitutes a threat to the internal security of the United States.

"The Committee does not hold that the relatively small group of Black Panthers has at any time constituted a clear and present danger to the continued functioning of the U.S. Government or any other institutions of our democratic society."

However, the "insidious and virulent force" of the Panther movement is strong enough to warrant a continued congressional "alert," the committee declared. It did not explain what the "alert" would require.

Police Deaths

Although it found the party's propaganda, calling for killing of police officers, to be a "malevolent influence" in American life, the committee did not conclude specifically that the Panthers have deliberately caused police deaths.

The committee, which traced the party's history from its inception in Oakland, Calif., found that one Panther community service — free breakfasts for school children — was for a time successful. About 20,000 children in 19 cities were being served, and simultaneously propagandized, by the Panthers, it estimated. Some food programs were taken over by other local community groups while others have been abandoned completely.

The committee report endorses legislation already proposed by the chairman, Rep. Richard H. Ichord (D-Mo.). It would bring under federal jurisdiction the killing of either a police

Hill Report Sees Panthers No Real Peril

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer